

FIRST LADY

“For Such a Time as This!” | A Bible Study of Esther 3-7

I. Review of Chapter 1-2 – The Fall of Vashti & Rise of Esther

- A. The Royal Court of Persia c. 470 B.C.
- B. The Divorce of Xerxes and Vashti
- C. The Nationwide Search for a Queen
- D. The Ultimate Beauty Pageant
- E. The Selection of Esther
 - 1. Gifts – outer and inner beauty
 - 2. Identity – a Jew
 - 3. Relationships – uncle Mordecai

II. Chapter 3 – Haman Plots Against Mordecai and the Jews

- A. Mordecai is unwilling to bow to Haman.
- B. Haman plots the genocide of Mordecai’s people.
- C. The “pur” is cast to set a date, the King convinced, the edict circulated

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews--young and old, women and little children--on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.” (Esther 3:13)

III. Chapter 4 – Mordecai Reacts and Challenges Esther

- A. Mordecai goes into mourning when learning of the deadly plan, then contacts Esther.
- B. Esther confesses her dilemma and feels unable to act.
- C. Mordecai issues a very sharp but ultimately constructive critique.
- D. Esther resolves to act if Mordecai and others will fast and pray.

"Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14)

IV. Chapter 5 – Esther Develops and Implements a Brilliant and Daring Plan

- A. Esther goes to Xerxes. Xerxes offers her almost anything she wants.
- B. Esther throws two parties for Haman, lulling him deeper into arrogant presumption.
- C. Haman resolves to get rid of Mordecai sooner rather than later.

"Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built. (Esther 5:14)

V. Chapter 6 – Xerxes Resolves to Honor Mordecai

- A. Xerxes learns of Mordecai’s earlier heroism and resolves to honor him.
- B. Haman unwittingly believes that he himself is the one to be honored and winds up having to oversee the celebration for Mordecai.

C. Haman's advisors see a big fall coming, but Haman descends deeper into delusion.

His advisers and his wife said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him--you will surely come to ruin!" (Esther 6:13)

VI. Chapter 7 – Esther Tightens the Snare and Haman Falls

- A. At the second banquet for Haman, Esther finally answers the King's question and humbly pleads for her life and that of her people.
- B. The king is enraged to discover that it is Haman who has pridefully cooked up this scheme and duped the king into it.
- C. When Haman appears to now be sexually molesting the queen, Xerxes has him hung on the very gallows prepared for Mordecai.

"If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life--this is my petition. And spare my people--this is my request. For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king." Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Hang him on it!" (Esther 7:3-4, 9-10)

VII. Thoughts To Take With You

- A. If we remain trusting in God and responsive to his Spirit, the circumstances and changes that happen along life's journey will finally serve to:
 - 1. Refine our GIFTS and engage them more fully in the purposes of God's Kingdom;
 - 2. Deepen an IDENTITY that finds its sense of security and direction in God;
 - 3. Forge RELATIONSHIPS of love and loyalty that outlast the crises of life and become our greatest prize in the midst of those tough times.
- B. Jesus Christ demonstrates that God is not like some unresponsive King who is angry when you bring your concerns to Him. He is one who says to you: *"Come unto me." (Matt. 11:28; Mark 10:14)*
"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6)
- C. Elements of a constructive call to action (for you or someone else):
 - 1. Don't think that inaction means escape from consequences.
 - 2. Understand that God is going to work out his good purposes, finally, with or without you.
 - 3. Why not be part of his redemptive plan? Perhaps he has prepared you and positioned you *"for such a time as this?"*
- D. To what extent have you found these biblical precept to be true?
 - Precept #1: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)*
 - Precept #2: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." (1 Peter 5:6)*